

O 290745Z JAN 01
FM AMEMBASSY KINSHASA
TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 8835
INFO SOUTHERN AFRICAN DEVELOPMENT COMMUNITY
AMEMBASSY BANGUI
AMEMBASSY BUJUMBURA
AMEMBASSY KAMPALA
AMEMBASSY KIGALI
AMEMBASSY LIBREVILLE
XMT AMCONSUL DURBAN
AMCONSUL JOHANNESBURG

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 KINSHASA 000478

E.O. 12958: DECL: 01/29/2010

TAGS: [PGOV](#) [CG](#)

SUBJECT: INAUGURAL ADDRESS: CONTINUITY AND CHANGE

REF: A. KINSHASA 476

[1](#)B. KINSHASA 475

CLASSIFIED BY AMBASSADOR WILLIAM LACY SWING FOR REASONS
1.5(B)(D)

[1](#)1. (C) SUMMARY:

NEWLY-INAUGURATED PRESIDENT JOSEPH KABILA ADDRESSED THE CONGOLESE PEOPLE EVENING OF JANUARY 26. HIS HALF HOUR ADDRESS SKILLFULLY THREADED HIS SLAIN FATHER'S NAME AND LEGACY THROUGHOUT HIS REMARKS WITH COURSE CORRECTIONS ON ABOUT ALL MAJOR ISSUES AND AREAS OF CONCERN. HIS REFORM-MINDED AGENDA HAS BEEN, OVERALL, WELL RECEIVED HERE, HELPING TO MAINTAIN THE CALM ALTHOUGH, NOW, THE CHALLENGE WILL BE TO INITIATE RATHER QUICKLY SOME CONCRETE MEASURES TO IMPLEMENT THE CHANGES KABILA HAS OUTLINED. THERE IS A FAIRLY GENERALIZED RUMOR (AND EXPECTATION) THAT ONE SUCH EARLY MEASURE WILL BE A NEW GOVERNMENT, INCLUDING THE NAMING OF A PRIME MINISTER. END SUMMARY.

[1](#)2. (C) REFORM-MINDED INAUGURAL REMARKS

AWAITED WITH GREAT ANTICIPATION AND SOME ANXIETY LOCALLY, JOSEPH KABILA'S INAUGURAL SPEECH SKILLFULLY EULOGIZED LAURENT-DESIRE KABILA'S POLICIES WHILE, SIMULTANEOUSLY, ALTERING THEM, WITH FEW EXCEPTIONS (SUCH AS, FOR EXAMPLE, HIS INSISTENCE THAT ELECTIONS COULD ONLY BE HELD AFTER RWANDAN AND UGANDAN TROOPS DEPART).

[1](#)3. (C) KABILA EULOGIZED

JOSEPH KABILA BEGAN AND CONCLUDED HIS CAREFULLY-PREPARED HALF-HOUR ADDRESS WITH ELABORATE PRAISE FOR HIS LATE FATHER, PRESIDENT LAURENT-DESIRE KABILA. WHOM HE EULOGIZED VARIOUSLY AS "ARCHITECT OF THE NATION'S LIBERATION" WHO "REAWAKENED ITS NATIONAL CONSCIENCE...PRIDE AND DIGNITY"; A "VISIONARY," "FORERUNNER" AND "STATESMAN."

THE NEW PRESIDENT ASSERTED THAT KABILA WAS ONE OF THE "RARE" CONTEMPORARY LEADERS WHO CONTRACTED NO FOREIGN DEBT AND WHO DID NOT "ENRICH" HIMSELF, CALLING HIM "AUSTERE," "DISCREET, SIMPLE, HUMBLE, FRIENDLY, AND OF LARGE GENEROSITY." LUMUMBA LED THE CONGO TO INDEPENDENCE, HE SAID, AND LAURENT KABILA "STRUGGLED WITH HIS TRAGIC DEATH" FOR THE CONGO. JOSEPH KABILA ASSURED THE CONGOLESE PEOPLE THAT A "JUDICIAL INVESTIGATION" OF THE ASSASSINATION IS ALREADY UNDERWAY.

[1](#)4. (C) A COMPREHENSIVE ROAD MAP

UNDER THE OVERALL RUBRIC OF A "POLICY OF OVERTURE AND CHANGE," PRESIDENT JOSEPH KABILA ADDRESSED A SERIES OF

"CHALLENGES" WHICH, HE SAID, THE CONGO (DRC) FACES, PREFACING THIS BY "DEVOTING MYSELF TO MAKING DEEP CHANGES IN ALL SECTORS OF NATIONAL LIFE." AMONG THE MAJOR POLITICAL CHALLENGES, HE SAID, ARE:

-- ESTABLISHING PEACE AND CONSOLIDATING NATIONAL COHESION. (THIS WILL REQUIRE THE "IMMEDIATE AND UNCONDITIONAL WITHDRAWAL OF THE AGGRESSOR STATES -- RWANDA, BURUNDI AND UGANDA." IN THIS REGARD, HE PROMISED TO "EXAMINE WAYS AND MEANS OF REVIVING THE LUSAKA ACCORD.")

-- NORMALIZATION OF DEMOCRATIC LIFE, WITH THE GOALS OF STRENGTHENING RULE OF LAW, DEMOCRACY, GOOD GOVERNANCE, HUMAN RIGHTS AND JUSTICE.

-- NATIONAL RECONSTRUCTION, WHICH THE "WAR OF AGGRESSION" HAD SIDETRACKED.

-- POLITICAL OPENNESS TO PERMIT ALL TO BE ABLE TO EXERCISE THEIR RIGHTS. HE UNDERLINED THAT POLITICAL ISSUES ARE TO BE RESOLVED WITHIN THE FRAMEWORK OF THE INTER-CONGOLESE DIALOGUE AND HE CALLED FOR PURSUIT OF EFFORTS TO CONCLUDE THE "LIBREVILLE PROCESS."

-- JUDICIAL REFORM, STARTING WITH RESTRICTING THE MILITARY COURT TO TRYING MILITARY, NOT CIVILIAN AFFAIRS.

-- FREE AND TRANSPARENT ELECTIONS "ONCE PEACE IS ACHIEVED AND TERRITORIAL INTEGRITY RESTORED."

15. (C) ECONOMIC REFORMS

NOTING THE DRAMATIC DECLINE IN BUSINESS ACTIVITY, KABILA PROPOSED SEVERAL ECONOMIC LIBERALIZATION MEASURES TO REVIVE THE ECONOMY AND CREATE WEALTH TO FIGHT POVERTY:

-- LIBERALIZING THE GOODS AND SERVICES MARKET IN THE DIAMOND SECTOR AND THE CURRENCY EXCHANGE SECTOR;

-- AUTHORIZATION OF THE FREE CIRCULATION OF FOREIGN CURRENCIES CONCOMITANTLY WITH THE CONGOLESE FRANC;

-- A NEW MINING CODE, AND A NEW INVESTMENT CODE;

-- A FRAMEWORK FOR EXCHANGE OF VIEWS BETWEEN THE GOVERNMENT AND THE PRIVATE SECTOR; AND,

-- AN APPEAL TO INTERNATIONAL FINANCIAL INSTITUTIONS TO PROVIDE FINANCIAL AND TECHNICAL SUPPORT TO THE CONGO'S NATIONAL RECONSTRUCTION EFFORTS.

(HE OFFERED NO DETAILS ON ANY OF THESE ISSUES.)

16. (C) A MORE ACTIVE CONGO IN
WORLD AFFAIRS

STATING THAT THE DRC INTENDED TO PLAY A MORE ACTIVE ROLE IN WORLD AFFAIRS, KABILA ADDRESSED AFRICA (OAU, SADC, COMESA, AND SUPPORT FOR THE BURUNDI PEACE PROCESS OF MR. MANDELA).

ON THE EUROPEAN UNION, HE SINGLED OUT FRANCE, LAUDING IT FOR ITS UNSC EFFORTS, AND BELGIUM, HOPING TO DEVELOP FRIENDLY TIES AND ENTENTE.

AS REGARDS THE U.S., KABILA SAID HE WOULD NOT HIDE THE PERIODS OF MUTUAL MISUNDERSTANDING WITH THE CLINTON ADMINISTRATION. ON THE OTHER HAND, HE STATED THE INTENTION OF "NORMALIZING" BILATERAL RELATIONS WITH THE NEW BUSH ADMINISTRATION.

THE NEW PRESIDENT REITERATED HIS GOVERNMENT'S COMMITMENT TO COOPERATE WITH MONUC ON THE URGENT DEPLOYMENT OF ITS FORCES IN ORDER TO RESTORE PEACE.

7.(C) COMMENT:

AS A CONSENSUS DOCUMENT AT THIS JUNCTURE -- TEN DAYS AFTER PRESIDENT LAURENT-DESIRE KABILA'S ASSASSINATION -- PRESIDENT JOSEPH KABILA'S INAUGURAL ADDRESS IS ENCOURAGING, REFLECTING A SHIFT TOWARD THE REFORM AND MODERATE ELEMENTS IN THE CONGOLESE POWER STRUCTURE.

WHILE MORE SPECIFICS WOULD HAVE BEEN DESIRABLE (SUCH AS, FOR EXAMPLE, A STATED INTENTION TO ABOLISH, OR AT LEAST MODIFY, DECREE 194 ON POLITICAL PARTIES) -- THE GENERAL FRAMEWORK, TONE AND THRUST OF JOSEPH KABILA'S REMARKS POINT TOWARD A POLICY OF GREATER OPENNESS AND PERHAPS THE BEGINNING OF A RECONCILIATION PROCESS AND -- AT LAST, THE DEPLOYMENT OF MONUC.

EVERYONE WILL NOW BE WATCHING CAREFULLY THE WILL AND CAPACITY OF JOSEPH KABILA AND THOSE AROUND HIM TO IMPLEMENT WHAT, FROM ALL ACCOUNTS, IS A PROGRAM THAT COULD PROPEL THE CONGO FORWARD. IN THIS REGARD, PERHAPS THE FIRST NEXT STEP TO WATCH FOR WILL BE WHETHER OR NOT HE SHORTLY FORMS A NEW GOVERNMENT (INCLUDING A POSSIBLE PRIME MINISTER).

SWING